

March 15, 1950

Professor H. Bethe
Physics Department
Cornell University
Ithica, New York

Dear Bethe:

I believe I asked you whether you could come to Chicago to a meeting from March 31 to April 2. We found it impossible to arrange this meeting since those whom we wanted most were not free at that time. I thought I would let you know so that you wouldn't keep your time unnecessarily free for that period.

It is possible that the meeting will be arranged for a later date, and if so, I will let you know as soon as the date is set.

Sincerely,

Leo Szilard

Second class

1155 East 57th Street
Chicago 37, Illinois
March 24, 1950

Dr. Hans A. Bethe
Laboratory of Nuclear Studies
Cornell University
Ithica, New York

Dear Bethe:

Many thanks for your letter of the 21st and the enclosures contained with it. The old pages of your manuscript, pages 6, 7, and 9, I am returning to you enclosed as per your circular letter of March 20.

I do not intend to follow up our broadcast by any more answers or discussions in the press, but I might write an article for the Foreign Policy Association in which I shall touch upon the political aspects of murder and suicide. My opinion at present is that this is technically difficult, but if possible, then politically an important defensive device. Naturally it is not a short range possibility. Cushman's list is interesting, though some of the names which he put down with a star I know very well and some of them are quite unsuitable because of poor power of judgment. However, the list may contain some very useful suggestions even though it is heavily weighted in favor of professors.

2 - Hans A. Bethe - March 24, 1950

I shall attempt to keep in touch with you, and if you pass through Chicago, please try to contact me. I live at the Quadrangle Club, telephone Hyde Park 3-8601.

Sincerely yours,

Leo Szilard

wv

Persson
to file

November 29, 1957

Dr. H. Bethe
Physics Department
Cornell University
Ithaca, N.Y.

Dear Bethe,

I wonder whether you are aware of the following fact:

If you were Privatdozent in Germany before the war and if you left on account of the measures instituted by the Nazi government you have a claim of Wiedergutmachung. According to the law passed in December 1955, if it is likely that you would have become a full professor in Germany if it had not been for the Nazi government, you have the right either to claim a professorship now (which you will hardly want to do) or in lieu of this you can ask to be classed as a Professor emeritus. In this case you will obtain currently an income of about \$ 5000.- a year (less about 20% German tax) and back-payment of about \$ 15.000.- (after German taxes).

The dead line for replying was in December of last year but the officials of the Bundesinnenministerium told me that the policy is to be very lenient with those who did not know about the law and therefore apply late.

I assume that I should have written you before this but I somehow did not think that you were old enough to be Privatdozent when you left Germany. Someone here told me that you had been Privatdozent and hence I am writing you this letter. It seems likely to me that you know about all this and that you may have applied, but I am nevertheless writing in order to be on the safe side. The application has to be filed with a German consulate.

If you need further information, drop me a line by return mail.

Sincerely,
Leo Szilard.

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Personal

CORNELL UNIVERSITY
LABORATORY OF NUCLEAR STUDIES
ITHACA, NEW YORK

A. Bethe

December 31, 1957

Professor Leo Szilard
Hotel Kempinski
Kurfurstendamm 27
Berlin W15
Germany

Dear Szilard:

Thank you very much for your letter of November 29 concerning pensions for former German Privatdozents.

I did not know about this law, and have applied for such a pension with the German Consulate in New York. Thanks very much for drawing my attention to this; I hope you are eligible, too.

With best regards.

Yours sincerely,

Hans Bethe

Hans A. Bethe

HAB:vr

stable

CORNELL UNIVERSITY
LABORATORY OF NUCLEAR STUDIES
ITHACA, NEW YORK

Current drafts

March 30, 1962

Dr. Leo Szilard
Hotel DuPont Plaza
Washington 6, D.C.

Dear Dr. Szilard:

When Dr. Bethe returned to his office this morning, I told him that you had called and inquired about the statement which was issued early in 1950 about the H-bomb.

He said the statement appeared in the New York Times about the end of January or beginning of February 1950; he thought it was on a Saturday, closest to the first of February. He gave me a few of the names of persons who had signed it. Then, on looking in an old folder on the H-bomb, we found the enclosed sheets (a copy of the statement and a list of the signers).

Sincerely yours,

Velma H. Ray

Mrs. Velma H. Ray
Secretary to Dr. Bethe

Enclosures

A few days ago, President Truman decided that this country should go ahead with the construction of a hydrogen bomb.

This decision was one of the utmost gravity. Few of the men who publicly urged the President to make this decision can have realized its full import. Among the reports in the press was a great deal of misinformation. However, it was stated correctly that a hydrogen bomb, if it can be made, would be capable of developing a power 1000 times greater than the present atomic bomb. New York, or any other of the greatest cities of the world, could be destroyed by a single hydrogen bomb.

We believe that no nation has the right to use such a bomb, no matter how righteous its cause. This bomb is no longer a weapon of war but a means of extermination of whole populations. Its use would be a betrayal of all standards of morality and of Christian civilization itself.

Senator McMahon, in a speech on Thursday, has pointed out to the American people that the possession of the hydrogen bomb will not give positive security to this country. We shall not have a monopoly of this bomb, but it is certain that the Russians will be able to make one too. In the case of the fission bomb the Russians required four years to parallel our development. In the case of the hydrogen bomb they will probably need a shorter time. We must remember that we do not possess the bomb but are only developing it, and we have given to Russia, through indiscretion, the most valuable hint that our experts believe the development possible. Perhaps the development of the hydrogen bomb has already been under way in Russia for some time. But if it was not, our decision to develop it must have started the Russians on the same program. If they had already a going program, they will redouble their efforts.

Statements in the press have given the power of the H bomb as between 2 and 1000 times that of the present fission bomb. Actually the thermonuclear reaction, which the H bomb is based, is limited in its power only by the amount of hydrogen which can be carried in the bomb. Even if the power were limited to 1000 times that of a present atomic bomb, the step from an A-bomb to an H-bomb would be as great as that from an ordinary TNT bomb to the atom bomb.

To create such an ever-present peril for all the nations in the world is against the vital interests of both Russia and the United States. Three prominent senators have called for renewed efforts to eliminate this weapon, and of other weapons of mass destruction from the arsenals of all nations. Such efforts should be made, and made in all sincerity from both sides.

In the meantime, we urge that the United States, through its elected government, make a solemn declaration that we shall never use this bomb first. The only circumstance which might force us to use it would be if we or our allies were attacked by this bomb. There can be only one justification for our development of the hydrogen bomb, and that is to prevent its use.

List of Signers:

(All the signers are Professors of Physics at their respective Universities, except for Dr. Tuve)

S. K. Allison, Director of Institute for Nuclear Studies
University of Chicago
K. T. Bainbridge, Harvard University
H. A. Bethe, Cornell University
R. B. Brode, University of California
C. C. Lauritsen, Director of Kellogg Radiation Laboratory
California Institute of Technology
F. W. Loomis, Chairman of Physics Department, University of
Illinois
G. B. Pegram, Dean of Graduate Faculties, Columbia University
B. Rossi, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
F. Seitz, University of Illinois
M. A. Tuve, Director, Department of Terrestrial Magnetism,
Carnegie Institution, Washington, D. C.
V. F. Weisskopf, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
M. G. White, Princeton University

During the War, Professor Allison was Director of the Metallurgical Laboratory in Chicago in which the first atomic pile was built and the Hanford pile was designed. Later on, he was Associate Director of the Los Alamos Laboratory. Professors Bainbridge and Bethe were division leaders, and Professors Brode, Rossi, and Weisskopf were leaders of important groups at Los Alamos. Professor Lauritsen was the director of an important subcontract project working for the Los Alamos Laboratory, as well as of an independent wartime project. Professor Seitz led an important group in the Metallurgical Laboratory and the Oak Ridge Laboratory. Dean Pegram was the director of the early atomic energy project at Columbia.

Professor Loomis was Associate Director of the Radiation Laboratory at M. I. T. which was the chief laboratory developing Radar in this country. Professors Bainbridge and White were division leaders in that laboratory, and others of the group were also members of the laboratory. Dr. Tuve was Director of the project which developed the proximity fuse, and Professor Brode was a prominent member of that group.

Professor Loomis is retiring president of the American Physical Society, Professor Lauritsen is Vice-President elect of the Society, Professor Pegram Treasurer and past president, Professors Seitz and Weisskopf are members of the Council and Professor Bethe member of the council elect. The signers do not speak for the Physical Society, nor for any other group.

CORNELL UNIVERSITY
LABORATORY OF NUCLEAR STUDIES
ITHACA, NEW YORK

September 18, 1962

Dr. Leo Szilard
Dupont Plaza Hotel
1500 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W.
Washington 6, D.C.

Dear Leo:

I have thought some more about your proposal, and have concluded that I do not want to go.

Part of my reason is that I really would not know what to say. I agree very largely with the attitude and the proposals of our government during the last year, and I find very little response from the Russians. It really is their turn.

A second point is that in my opinion there are now many easy channels of communication between the two governments. Informal discussions at Geneva are one important channel. Another are discussions between Dobrynin and various members of the U.S. Government. I am told that these discussions are conducted in a very frank manner even if they do not seem to lead to any concrete results. Finally, the Working Groups of the Pugwash Conference although not official are certainly contacts in which very similar problems can be and have been discussed as those which you had in mind for the "Conference of Angels".

Yours sincerely,

Hans
Hans A. Bethe

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